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Local representatives of the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) publicly state they are not in favour of early presidential elections. President Hery Rajaonarimampianina (2014 – present) holds talks with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) (international organisation of French speaking countries) about the upcoming summit in Antananarivo. Authorities arrest an alleged cyber terrorist, and reportedly deport 10 Pakistani imams for visa violations. Authorities charge five people over the murder of two French nationals on the island of Saint Marie. African Development Bank (AfDB) president Akinwumi Adesina visits Madagascar to announce further support development support. United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) director general Jose Graziano da Silva visits and highlights food insecurity issues in southern Madagascar. Malagasy officials hold talks with South Korean officials on how to enhance cooperation and investment in Madagascar.

AU & UN do not support early elections

Malagasy media reported on 1 September that local representatives of the **United Nations (UN)** and **African Union (AU)** publicly stated they are not in favour of **Madagascar** holding early presidential elections.¹ The announcements will reinforce political stability in Madagascar, and help put an end to calls from the opposition to impeach president **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** (2014 – present) for failing to improve the economy, and to hold early elections (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar June and August 2016*).² UN representative to Madagascar **Violet Kakyomya** joined AU representative to Madagascar **Awa Ahmed Youssouf** in calling for Malagasy politicians to respect the electoral calendar and hold the presidential election as expected in 2018, in order to preserve and promote political stability and national reconciliation.³ Youssouf said,

“Who will fund the early elections? ... the need for national reconciliation [is the only way] to ensure lasting stability.”⁴

Former ousted president **Marc Ravalomanana** (2002-2009), who plans to run for president in 2018 (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar August 2016*), also warned against holding early election without the support of the international community.⁵

Rajaonarimampianina in Paris for talks with IOF

President Rajaonarimampianina arrived in **Paris (France)** on 12 September to hold talks with the **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)** (international organisation of French speaking countries).⁶ The objective of Rajaonarimampianina’s talks with the IOF is to prepare the groundwork for the upcoming 16th OIF summit scheduled for **Antananarivo** on 26 and 27 November (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar May and July 2016*).⁷ While in Paris, Rajaonarimampianina attended the

¹ www.bbc.com

² www.bbc.com

³ www.bbc.com

⁴ www.bbc.com

⁵ www.bbc.com

⁶ www.madagascar-tribune.com

⁷ www.rfi.fr

1st **Francophonie Day and Digital Economy**, and held talks with the IOF summit organising committee and IOF secretary general **Michaëlle Jean**.⁸

Rajaonarimampianina will chair the summit. He has appointed **Hugues Ratsiferana** president of the **Conseil National d'Orientation** (national policy council) for the IOF summit.⁹ It is the first IOF summit held in Madagascar and the second to take place in the region, after the 5th IOF summit in **Grand-Baie (Mauritius)** in 1993.¹⁰ Madagascar has chosen the theme 'Shared growth and responsible development: conditions for stability around the world and within La Francophonie' for the IOF summit.¹¹ The IOF hopes the summit will,

*"...contribute to the promotion of inclusive growth and structural transformation, creating lasting employment in the Francophone world... [with] a special emphasis on technology, women and youth as essential levers to achieve sustainable development."*¹²

Prior to the IOF summit, the 32nd session of the **Conférence ministérielle de la Francophonie (CMF)** (Ministerial conference of French speaking countries), will take place on 23 and 24 November and a session of the **Conseil permanent de la Francophonie (CPF)** (Permanent Council of French speaking countries) will take on 22 November.¹³ Madagascar foreign minister **Béatrice Atallah** will chair the 32nd session of the CMF.¹⁴ A key concern of the IOF is to ensure security for the delegates (see below).

Authorities arrest alleged cyber terrorist

Malagasy authorities arrested an alleged cyber terrorist on 17 September.¹⁵ The Malagasy national allegedly sent threatening emails to **Air France**, claiming he had links to **Islamic State (IS)** and that he would carry out an attack on the airline unless it paid him €85,000 (\$94,750). Madagascar is not known as a centre of radical Islam and has not experienced any major Islamist-linked terrorist attack, however the government is taking all threats seriously in the run-up to the IOF summit (see above).¹⁶ Investigations are ongoing to ascertain if the suspect acted alone to try to extort money from businesses and individuals in France and Madagascar, or if he has any actual links to IS as he claimed in the emails to Air France.¹⁷ After Air France notified the French and Malagasy authorities, Malagasy investigators were able to track the IP address of the computers used to send the message and identify the suspect.¹⁸ The suspect reportedly confessed to the Air France emails as well as to other threatening emails to other airlines and other French and Malagasy nationals.¹⁹

Government reportedly deports Imams

Malagasy media reported on 18 September that the interior ministry has deported 10 **Pakistani** imams who taught at koranic schools in south-eastern Madagascar.²⁰ The official reasons for the deportation were that the 10 Pakistani imams overstayed their 15-day tourist visa, did not apply for or extend visas for missionary work, and did not have the legal right to undertake "professional

⁸ www.madagascar-tribune.com

⁹ www.international.gc.ca

¹⁰ www.international.gc.ca

¹¹ www.international.gc.ca

¹² www.international.gc.ca

¹³ www.international.gc.ca

¹⁴ www.international.gc.ca

¹⁵ RFI, 15 Sept 2016.

¹⁶ RFI, 15 Sept 2016.

¹⁷ RFI, 15 Sept 2016.

¹⁸ RFI, 15 Sept 2016.

¹⁹ RFI, 15 Sept 2016.

²⁰ www.lagazette-dgi.com

activities".²¹ The Malagasy authorities discovered the visa violations during an investigation into the irregular slaughter of hundreds of cows as part of Eid-el-Kebir celebrations.²²

The imams are not suspected of any other illegal activities, other than their visa violations. However, the Malagasy authorities may have decided to deport the imams as a security precaution to prevent the possible radicalisation of the young members of the imam's koranic schools in the run-up to the upcoming IOF (see above).²³ As one political analyst noted in a leading Malagasy newspaper,

*"More than seven of 10 young Malagasy are poor, according to data from the **International Labour Office (ILO)**. Thus, radical Islamisation could recruit future terrorists within the Malagasy population. These new elements could be used elsewhere in Madagascar. But they could also take as targets of international meetings organised in the country. Thus the **American and French intelligence** would fear terrorist attacks planned summit of the Francophonie in November."*²⁴

Authorities charge five people over the murder of two French nationals

Authorities in Madagascar charged five people on 5 September over the murder of two French nationals on the island of **Saint Marie** in August.²⁵ The quick charges against the alleged suspects will help Madagascar's tourism sector, in particular Saint Marie, a well-known eco-tourism destination, recover from the negative economic impact of the murders.²⁶ Among the five individuals charged in connection with the double murder, is a French national and boyfriend of one of the victims, who lives on Saint Marie.²⁷

AfDB president visits

African Development Bank (AfDB) president **Akinwumi Adesina** arrived in Madagascar on 29 August for an official visit.²⁸ The purpose of Adesina's visit is to further enhance AfDB efforts to support the implementation of the government's **National Development Plan (NDP)**.²⁹ The AfDB intends to intensify its cooperation with Madagascar focusing its assistance on implementation projects in three priority areas: agriculture, industrial development and regional integration, through the disbursement of \$600m over the next three to four years.³⁰ The AfDB will also support the development of 7,800 megawatts (MW) of hydropower electricity production as well as other renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.³¹

Over the past 50 years, the AfDB has provided \$1.8 billion to support agriculture, transport, mining, energy, water, health, education and governance in Madagascar.³² The AfDB's current portfolio in Madagascar includes 10 commitments totaling \$250m.³³ The AfDB is a key financial backer of the **Ambatovy** nickel project in a joint venture between Canada-based **Sherritt International** (40%), **Japan-based Sumitomo Corp** (32.5%) and **South Korea-based Korea Resources** (27.5%). Ambatovy is a laterite nickel mine and a hydrometallurgical processing plant; it is one of the largest mines and integrated metallurgical sites in the world, and the largest foreign investment in Madagascar.

²¹ www.lagazette-dgi.com

²² www.lagazette-dgi.com

²³ www.lagazette-dgi.com

²⁴ www.lagazette-dgi.com

²⁵ www.news24.com

²⁶ www.news24.com

²⁷ www.news24.com

²⁸ Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

²⁹ Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

³⁰ Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

³¹ Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

³² Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

³³ Multiple sources: www.financialafrik.com; www.newsmada.com

FAO director general visits

Jose Graziano da Silva, the director general of **United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)** arrived in Madagascar on 28 August for an official visit.³⁴ The purpose of da Silva's visit is to highlight food insecurity and the work the UN and Malagasy government are doing to address the challenge.³⁵ According to the **World Food Programme (WFP)**, 665,000 people are facing severe food insecurity due to drought in southern Madagascar.³⁶ Almost half do not receive assistance.³⁷ The most affected districts are **Amboasary, Ambovombe, Tsihombe, Beloha, Bekily, Ampanihy and Betioky**.³⁸ Da Silva said,

*"For the moment I will not say that we have a food crisis. We see crop damage and observe people's needs ... But we believe we are taking the right steps and we'll see what we need to do more."*³⁹

South Korea to strengthen bilateral relations with Madagascar

During the **Global Infrastructure Cooperation Conference** held in **Seoul** (South Korea) between 7 and 9 September, Malagasy government officials held talks with South Korean government officials and private businesses.⁴⁰ **Narson Rafidimanana**, Madagascar's minister in the presidency for special presidential projects and planning, met South Korea's infrastructure and transport minister **Kang Hoin** and they agreed to develop a comprehensive framework for cooperation with the objective of signing a bilateral cooperation agreement shortly.⁴¹ Rafidimanana also met with South Korean business leaders who expressed interest in infrastructure development, financing and consulting.⁴²

South Korea officially opened an embassy in Madagascar in July (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar July 2016*). The decision to open an embassy in Madagascar is part of South Korea's efforts to strengthen relations with **African** countries and to take advantage of Madagascar's resource potential.⁴³

Implications

The UN and AU's firm stance against early presidential elections will help calm the political environment as opposition politicians call for the impeachment of Rajaonarimampianina.

Rajaonarimampianina's talks with the IOF will help ensure the upcoming IOF summit in November is successful. Security concerns remain high on the agenda, particularly for France. The arrest of a suspected cyber terrorist who allegedly targeted French and Malagasy individuals and companies, shows that both governments are actively addressing the concern. Madagascar is not known as a centre of radical Islamism, but the government's decision to deport 10 Pakistani imam's for visa violations was a precautionary measure to prevent the radicalisation of youth in the run up to the IOF summit.

Adesina's visit to Madagascar indicates the AfDB is keen on helping the government address its social and economic objectives, which the government has struggled to deliver due to a lack of financing and international development assistance. The government does not have the resources to address the food insecurity situation in southern Madagascar; hence is reliant on international aid commitments in the short and medium term.

³⁴ L'Express de Madagascar, 29 Aug 2016.

³⁵ L'Express de Madagascar, 29 Aug 2016.

³⁶ www.bbc.com

³⁷ www.bbc.com

³⁸ www.bbc.com

³⁹ www.bbc.com

⁴⁰ www.newsmada.com

⁴¹ www.newsmada.com

⁴² www.newsmada.com

⁴³ Multiple sources: oilprice.com; World.kbs.co.kr

South Korea's plan to improve investment ties with Madagascar is a sign the Malagasy government is looking beyond its traditional trade and investment partners, such as France, to back the development of key infrastructure and resource projects.

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

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